

My name is Manuel Lerman, I reside in Manchester, CT, and am writing in support of SB 1088:An Act. I would like to thank Senator Gerratana, Representative Ritter, and the members of the Public Health Committee for raising the bill, and would like to urge the passage of the bill from committee.

I am a retired University of Connecticut Professor with a Special Needs son who is served by MARC, Inc, FAVARH and DDS. Both my wife and I have been actively involved with ARC agencies; I am currently on the Board of Directors of MARC, Inc, its Secretary, a member of its Executive Committee, and chair its Programs and Services Committee. I am aware of the great need to support many special needs individuals and families with developmentally disabled members, having personally experience in this area, and the desires of parents and guardians to have their children and charges lead a meaningful and enjoyable life. Our son participates in many community activities and in a work program, and as such, enjoys his life and contributes to society. I would be very unhappy to see him relegated to an environment in which he is isolated, and cannot interact with the community or have a feeling of being a worthwhile contributor to the society in which he lives. I feel that all citizens should have the opportunity to lead a meaningful, productive and interactive life. This is not the case with sheltered institutions. Furthermore, the expense per individual in these institutions is much greater than the expense to house them in group homes within a community. Thus I urge the passage of this act.